

My relentless pursuit for contentment

I am a person with everything.

I live in a metropolitan city, study in one of the top schools in Singapore, have doting parents and understanding friends. I should be happy. Yet, as much as I hate to admit it, I am never contented. There is always something about my life that I am not satisfied with. I constantly search to fill that void in me so that I can become completely fulfilled.

Recently, it dawned upon me that the only thing standing in my way is me. I am the one taking everything in my life for granted, and dwelling on what I do not have makes me discontented. I have come to realise that the key to contentment is to look at what you have and not what you do not have.

Living in Singapore, the “garden city”, where people do not worry about where they will sleep at night, is a blessing. My trip to Cambodia last year, where I saw young children having to beg on the streets for pennies and sleep on the cold concrete floor made me realise how fortunate I am. I do not even have to make a living for myself while these children struggle everyday just to get one dollar for their daily expenses. How lucky I am.

I constantly complain of how our workload is heavy, how our teachers constantly torture us with towering stacks of assignments and how my friends are smarter than I am. Honestly, studying has not been much of a problem for me and I do fairly well in school. What I now realise is how easy my school life has been compared to other people in Singapore. ‘A’s have always been within my reach, while others are desperately trying to pass in their subjects. My friends in other schools are starting to worry about whether or not they can apply to junior colleges or polytechnics. My path is simple- I will go straight across the road to the top junior college in Singapore. How convenient.

My parents are the greatest gift of all. They unconditionally try to provide for me in whatever way they can and care for me. They want me to be healthy and well, emphasizing every single night that I should sleep early. They act as my erasers and correct my mistakes. However, I take them for granted. I should be thankful to them instead.

My father once gave me a notebook with this phrase on it: *I am not demanding, I am respectfully asking*. Jokes aside, it made me reflect on myself. I have used too many “I”s in my life and I should be contented with what I have and remember not to take anything in my life for granted. *Be happy with what you have and are, be generous with both, and you won't have to hunt for happiness- William Gladstone.*